MR. COBBETT'S REMARKS

ON OUR

INDIAN EMPIRE

AND

COMPANY OF TRADING SOVEREIGNS.

(Reprinted from the *Register* of 1804 to 1822.)

Cobbett, William, 1763-1835.

MR. JOHN FIELDEN

ON

"COTTON SUPPLY."

(Quotations from his *Pamphlet* of 1836.)

LONDON, SEPT., 1857.

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"Colonel Montressor has been very successful in Bulum; has beat, burnt, plundered, and destroyed in all parts of the country." Again: "Camp at Soodnetty, August 1, 1800. Dear Munroe, take what you please from Nuggar; I have taken and destroyed Doondiah's baggage and six guns, and driven into the Malpurbar (where they were all drowned) five thousand people. I stormed Dumrill on the 26th, &c. My troops are in high spirits, and their pockets full of money, the produce of plunder."—*Dispatch of Colonel* WELLESLEY (Duke of WELLINGTON).—Richardson's *Black Book*, for 1848.

"We have to deal with foul treason and atrocious murder, to assert British power and re-establish British rights; and the whole world shall see that we know how to set about the work."—*Times* newspaper, Sept. 2, 1857.

"The success of the insurrection would involve anarchy in India, unless some great man, emerging from the chaos, should build up a new empire, based on and defended by military power. I am not prepared to defend the steps by which England has obtained dominion in the East; but, looking at the interests of India and of England, I cannot oppose such measures as may be deemed necessary to suppress the existing disorder."—Mr. JOHN BRIGHT'S *Address to the Electors of Birmingham, Morning Post*, Aug. 10, 1857.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."—*Matthew* v., 38, 39.

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MR. COBBETT'S REMARKS, &c.

[In the *Political Register*, of the late Mr. Cobbett, there are many articles and passages upon the subject of "our Indian Empire;" upon the numerous grievances of the native people, and upon the negligence, rapacity, and dishonesty attending the government of East Indians by Englishmen in power. Some of those articles and passages are here reprinted.

Both Parliament and people, in this country, seem to get less and less worthy of respect in proportion as they fancy themselves more and more civilised and intelligent. Sir Philip Francis once said in the House of Commons, when speaking of the disposition to *lean upon foreigners*,—"A base, corrupt, and abject people, when once they are properly frightened, will submit to any thing."

The Royal Speech, proroguing Parliament, on the 28th ult., was delivered by commission, and not in person. In that speech her Majesty has been advised "to express (to the *Lords and Gentlemen*) her confidence that, on their return to their several counties, they will employ that influence which so justly belongs to them to promote the welfare and happiness of her loyal and faithful people." But what real "*influence*" does either of these two bodies now possess? If the present state of things had existed forty years back, there would have been members of each House to insist upon having public meetings in all their "counties," and to call on the nation at large to protest against that sort of rule which has brought us, at last, to what is now seen and felt with universal horror. Instead of which, our representatives have only been dismissed for the time, because not wanted, to be summoned back when again wanted, and then only to vote more taxes.

The last dreadful Indian wars, the former cruel Chinese war, the degrading Burmese and Don Pacifico wars, the unhallowed Crimean expedition, followed up by the quarrel and breach with the Persians: all these have been tolerated by these *Lords and Gentlemen*. Nay; while we are "*not* at war with the Emperor of China," we are, along with an Indian revolution, in actual and deadly strife with a Chinese governor and his province, that strife being led on by men of a Sect the most remarkable for its hostility to the rights of the labouring people of England, the *Unitarians*.

The performances of this last session, and the scenes at the close of it, were, perhaps, the most characteristic of all that has ever happened. With an unfinished, and possibly spreading war at Canton; with mutiny, and the most harrowing murders throughout a large part of India; with a whole great "Empire" there, threatening, by revolt, to expel us, we saw a *Divorce Bill* produced to Parliament, under the name of "a great boon," and, to all appearance, expressly intended to give Peers, Judges, Members, Bishops, and newspapers something to wrangle over, and to distract them from other matters on which the most anxious attention ought to have been kept hourly fixed.—Editor, Sept., 1857.]

(From *Register*, April, 1804.)

War in India.—Though we are penned up in our island; though we are lining our coasts, barring up the mouths of our rivers, and surrounding our capital with fortified camps; though we are tremblingly straining our eyesight to watch the movements of our enemy, though signals and beacons are prepared to give us warning of his approach, and to indicate the moment when the people are to begin to flee with their cattle, and to leave their ricks, granaries, and barns burning behind them; though thus situated, thus humbled and debased, in Britain, we are, it seems, carrying on a most successful and glorious war in India; where the timid, tawny-skinned natives appear to serve as an object whereon to repay the insults we so patiently endure from the French, and where our conduct seems to furnish the grounds of but too plausible a justification of the encroachments and tyranny of France. The man whose first wish is, to see preserved the throne of this kingdom and the liberties of the people; such a man, if he takes time to reflect, will not be very eager to rejoice at the result of any war in India, which shall produce an extension of territory; for, suppose that such extension does not ultimately tend to the total destruction of the British power, its effect is very little less injurious in another way. The East India Company is already too powerful: the lawful monarchy of England cannot long support itself against the increasing influence of this *Association of Sovereigns:* the House of Brunswick is fast becoming nothing in comparison with the House of Baring & Co., of Goldsmid & Co., and fifty other Houses of the same description, which are hourly rising upon the ruins of the Aristocracy, the Church, and everything that was once esteemed noble and venerable in the land. A reflecting man, therefore, will see, in the success of these India wars, the source of new plunder, and a consequent increase of those upstarts, who, aided by the operation of the funding system, thrust the gentry of the country from their paternal domains, and introduce into the villages of England the haughtiness and insolence exercised over the sooty slaves of Hindostan.

(From *Register*, October, 1804.)

Unless Mr. Fox's Bill would have made a job of India, and rendered an extensive and valuable colony a millstone round the neck of England; unless it would have created in Leadenhall-street a set of Sovereigns, the rivals of the House of Brunswick; unless it would have powerfully assisted in impoverishing the landholders in England, in order to carry on wars for the enriching of upstarts to come, and thrust them from their fields and their mansions; unless its tendency was to expose us to the cruel mortification of beholding—

"The wealth of climes, where savage nations roam,
"Pillag'd from slaves to purchase slaves at home;"

unless these were the consequences to which Mr. Fox's India system inevitably tended, I think it would, at this time, be very hard to show, that it could have been so injurious to the kingdom as that which was adopted in its stead. —[Mr. Fox's India Bill was proposed and lost in 1783, Mr. Pitt's was carried in 1784.—*Editor.*]

(From *Register*, February, 1806.)

In these India affairs, the Pitts and Dundases have left the new Ministry a precious legacy. If the East India Company come to us for relief, let us, as parish officers do, inquire into their means; let us see what property they have; let us take their affairs into our hands, and see if we cannot, by the aid of men different from the Pitts and Dundases, manage them better. The deceived people, who were induced to set up such a howl about "chartered rights," and against Mr. Fox's India Bill, will now be convinced of their folly; they will now be convinced, that that Bill would have prevented their being loaded with millions upon millions

of taxes. This may make them think, and put them upon their guard against future attempts at imposture.

(From *Register*, August, 1805.)

War in India.—To endeavour to follow the East India dispatch-writers through their details would be excessively tiresome, and, withal, perfectly useless. We gather, from their recent accounts, that they have had more fighting; more wars of "necessity;" more bloody enterprises for the purpose of "securing the territory we already possess," and for "preserving the *tranquillity* of India;" and, we learn, besides, that the events, as hitherto announced, have verified, with great exactness, Mr. Francis's [afterwards Sir Philip Francis] prediction, that Holkar and his adherents would be more dangerous in their flight, than they had been in their approach. The fact appears to be, that the hero of the East has, at last, inspired cowards with some degree of courage; has goaded them on, till they have turned, and, for a-while, at least, taken vengeance. The only circumstance, in these details, upon which the mind rests, is a sorrowful one, namely, the great loss in the European part of our army in India. This loss must be *supplied.* And *how?* Have we regular soldiers to spare? Is this a moment for shipping off three or four thousand of our little army to the other side of the globe; and to fight *for what?* For *whose* security? For *whose* glory? To *enrich whom?* The *liberties of whom* to preserve? There is, upon record, a solemn declaration of the Parliament, that it is unwise as well as unjust for us to add to our conquests in India. Yet, we are continually adding to those conquests; continually acting in direct contradiction to that declaration; continually at war, not only against the natives of India but against our own possessions, and, against our own clearly perceived interests.

When the Parliament made the declaration above-mentioned, it was well satisfied, that the wars in India, and the consequent plunder, tended to enrich the persons concerned in them, but by no means to better the condition of England. It saw, in those sometimes-cruel and always-inglorious wars, a source of upstart wealth, of encroachment upon the ancient aristocracy, of effeminacy of manners, and of the basest species of corruption; it saw, to quote a sentiment of Mr. Pitt previous to *his fall;* it saw, that by the means of those justly reprobated wars, "many of the members of Parliament become the representatives of the Nabob of Arcot rather than of the people, or any part of the people, of England." These things the Parliament saw, and the declaration was made with a view of putting a stop to the evil. But, of what use has been that declaration? Wars have been incessant, from that day to this; and yet, has there ever been any inquiry into the conduct of those, by whom those wars have been begun and carried on? Have we not, on the contrary, seen every attempt to obtain inquiry stifled, by one means or another; and, have we not, even within these few months, seen the Parliament pass a vote of thanks to a person who had commenced and prosecuted a war in India, without having advertised the ministers at home of his intention? And, the reader ought to recollect, that, when, at the time of passing this vote, it was suggested, that, previous thereunto, some account of *the grounds* of the war ought to be given, the suggestion was rejected, almost with disdain, and the vote of thanks was unanimous! After this, the solemn declaration of Parliament should, I think, be rescinded; for it is a standing accusation against the conduct of the government, both at home and abroad, with regard to India.

We often hear very pathetic lamentations over the lot of those who are slain in battle; but, it does not occur to me, at present, that I ever heard any lamentations at all over the thousands of our fellow-subjects, who have perished in the wars in India. They have the honour to die for the good of trade, and for the prosperity of India stock! A consideration that wipes the tears from all

eyes! Their death, some Jew for whom, amongst others, they bleed, will tell you, is a melancholy thing, but "it *cannot be avoided.*" The stocks of whatever sort, like Mr. Pitt's place, are always regarded as something too sacred to be touched, or, if an evil, an evil to which we are, by our nature, or by the constitution of our country, at least, destined to submit, and to which, if we are wise, we will submit without murmuring. The public will soon see another embarkation of troops for India; and, what is more, they will hear the measure applauded.

(From *Register*, February, 1806.)

As to the glory of it, where, I would ask, is the glory of overrunning and plundering and subjugating countries, the inhabitants of which understand little or nothing of the art of European warfare, or who, at the very best, are but indifferently skilled therein, and are almost entirely unprovided with all other than the mere bodily means of carrying it on? The victories over them have never been regarded as victories by me, nor, I will venture to say, by any one Englishman, who has duly reflected upon the circumstances, under which they have been achieved. Let any one observe, the effect produced upon the public by the pompous accounts, published in our papers, relative to those victories, and then let him say, what is the degree of estimation in which they are generally held. They are, in fact, no victories at all. They are felt to be no victories; and, if the history of them should live for only a century, it will be read with feelings much about such as those which are excited at the reading of the "victories" of the Spaniards over the helpless and unoffending inhabitants of Mexico and Peru.

With respect to the "wisdom" of the wars in India, it might be enough to say, that they have been begun and continued in a direct, in an open, and daring violation, of a most positive and explicit declaration of Parliament; but, besides this, we are now about to feel, nay, we have already felt, that they have had no other tendency than that of adding to our financial embarrassments, of draining our country of men capable of bearing arms, and of sending to lord it, in England, men who by plunder have grown rich, and by an unbridled use of power have grown intolerably insolent and oppressive.

(From *Register*, April, 1808.)

India Affairs.—The recent intelligence from India, or, "our Empire in the East," is of a gloomy complexion, in my sight, only inasmuch as it gives an account of the loss of a great number of English officers and soldiers. It may serve to make men reflect justly on the nature of the wars we carry on in India; and may lead them to the conclusion, so much to be desired, namely, that the possession of that country is a terrible evil. This, it seems, is to be *the last* war; but, we have been told the same thing for more than thirty years past. There is a constant, a never-ceasing war in India. There is not always actual fighting; but, there are always going on preparations for fighting. What right, in God's name, what right have we to do this? How is it possible for us to justify our conduct, upon any principle of morality? Conquests in India are not at all necessary either to our safety or our comfort. There is no glory attending such conquests and their accompanying butcheries. We must be actuated by a sheer love of gain; a sheer love of plunder. I really believe that the history of the whole world does not afford an instance of a series of aggressions so completely unjustifiable and inexcusable.

But the Indian branch makes a considerable part of our *political* system. These colonies, on the other side of the globe, have no small share in the decision of all questions relative to us here at home. The East India interest is *embodied*, and it is always held in the hands of the Minister of the day. The East India adventurer is enriched by money paid out of the taxes raised here, and that money he frequently employs for the purpose of obtaining the power

of taxing us, for facilitating which employment the borough system is most admirably calculated. If corruption at elections were prevented, if the laws relating to elections were obeyed; if the constitution of England were adhered to, there would be little danger from combinations of any sort. If those who pay the greater part of the taxes were all to have their free voice; and if the qualifications were such as the law intended them to be; if no man having alien interests, and being exposed to no temptation to swerve from his duty, which duty, supposing him to be properly qualified, would have a perfect coincidence with his interest; if such were the state of the representation (and such the constitution of England means it should be), the nation would be in no danger whatever of seeing either its honour or its interest sacrificed to such bodies as the East India Company; but while things continue in their present state, it is impossible that such sacrifices should not be made. It is said now, that some regulations will be adopted, in India, for the purpose of conciliating the natives, and especially for the purpose of preventing any future attack upon their religious prejudices.

It would seem, that delegated rulers in "our Eastern Empire," are really alarmed at the threats of Napoleon, and are making preparations for defence, on the side of Persia. That is good. I wish to see them upon the alert. It will bring on the desired result. It will hasten that result; and will make it as certain as if Buonaparte himself were to enter India with an army. And here I must observe, how abominably cowardly our language respecting the French is. We appear to be more afraid of six Frenchmen than of thirty millions of Indians. When we are beaten, or in danger of being beaten in India, we always ascribe it *to the French.* Like the fellow in one of Goldsmith's plays, "go where we will we find the *Parlez-vous;*" and always are we, upon land, most dreadfully afraid of him. As to India, we are not at all ashamed to acknowledge, that, if the French could throw in a trifling force of their own, or, even a body of military officers only, we should soon be driven out of the country. We never hear the French expressing such terrible apprehensions at the influence of English military officers. These apprehensions of our India rulers are, however, by no means unfounded; for, if the French should get but a mere footing, they will very soon overset a company of as comfortable Sovereigns as the world ever saw.

(From *Register*, January, 1813.)

Sir William Curtis,* during this debate, expressed his fears, that a free trade to India might cause the introduction of political freedom. "If a free trade to India were once allowed, among other exports, they would probably soon have a variety of politicians, who would use their best endeavours to give the Hindoos a conception of the Rights of Man."

A most alarming thought, to be sure! Sir William Curtis is, then, for no *rights of man.* He is for keeping the poor slaves, slaves still. His wishes, however, will not be accomplished, I believe; and, he may yet live long enough to see men claiming and asserting their rights all over the world. But what a sentiment is this from an Englishman! His objection to an unrestricted intercourse with another part of the world, is, that it may lead to the teaching of enslaved men their rights! This is the objection which one of the Aldermen, who is also a member of Parliament for the *great City*, has to the opening of the trade to India. Commerce has, by many writers, been applauded for having produced an extension of knowledge and of freedom; but, this man objects to it on that account; he *fears* that the opening of trade may tend to the enlarging of the mind of man; he is *afraid* that a free intercourse would break the chains of a people! Let us hope, that there are very few assemblages of men in the world where such a sentiment would

* An alderman of the city of London, and noted bottle-companion of George the Fourth. —*Editor.*

not have been received with an unanimous exclamation of horror. And yet, I dare say, that Sir William Curtis is one of those who talks well about the despotism of Buonaparte's government, and who is loud in his prayers for the *deliverance of Europe.*

(From *Register*, February, 1813.)

Before I conclude, however, there is one reason, and that of great weight, which I shall state for my approbation of the proposed measure, or of any measure, the tendency of which is, to diminish the influence of the East India Company, and, indeed, to break up that body. And this reason is, that such a measure will have a powerful tendency to destroy political corruption in the city of London and in the county of Middlesex. That Company has long been a powerful phalanx in opposition to the voice of public liberty. At all elections, whether for the city or the county, that Company, with its numerous dependants at its heels, have had a monstrous influence, and that influence has always been exerted to the utmost against the rights of the people. If we look back to the causes of this war, we shall find the East India Company acting a prominent part. The East India House and the Bank have been amongst the forwardest in support of all those measures which led to the enormous taxes now weighing us to the earth; and, who can have failed to be filled with disgust at seeing it stated, in the documents and speeches of the opponents of the present measure, that its adoption would tend to introduce light and liberty into the enslaved countries under their sway?

I am not certain, nor do I flatter myself, that it is intended to change the interior system of government of India; but, of this I am very sure, that it cannot be intended to establish there any system of government more hateful to me than that which now exists there under the Company. What do they mean when they express their alarm, *lest an additional number of Europeans should find their way to India?* What sort of government must that be, which feels uneasiness at the prospect of seeing its acts subjected to the observation of well-informed men? What sort of government must that be, which dreads the approach of men accustomed to ideas of law and liberty? And I put it as a question to all those who have any pretensions to thinking, whether they think that the treasure and the blood of Englishmen ought to be expended in maintaining the possession of a colony, the mode of governing which will not bear the inspection of freemen, and trembles at the thought of a free communication with the natives of England? Whether this government will be put an end to, I know not; but that it may be is the sincere wish of

Wm. Cobbett.

(From *Register*, July and August, 1821.)

Letter to Mr. James Cropper, a Quaker Merchant of Liverpool, on his letter to Mr. Wilberforce, relating to East India and West India Sugar.

Kensington, 17 *July*, 1821.

Friend Cropper,—I find, in the *Dublin Mercantile Advertiser* of the 9th instant, a letter signed with your name, and addressed, in your sleek style, "*to William Wilberforce*," upon the subject of East India and West India Sugars. The letter has *no date;* but, it appears to have been written during the last Session of Parliament. It contains matter worthy of public notice, however unworthy the writer may be of such notice. Selfishness and hypocrisy, whenever they can be come at, whether they take refuge behind the bayonet, or under the broad-brimmed beaver, ought to be dragged forth if possible.

As long as you confined your pen to your counting-house concerns, and kept your correspondence within the limits of *manuscript*, the public had little to do with you; but, having appeared in *print*, voluntarily and ostentatiously too; and having held up to us your *humanity* as the motive of your writing, and even of your trade; and, having, at the same time, branded another description of traders with carrying on an infamous

traffic; having put yourself before us in this way, we have something to do with you.

Your letter, though full of ignorance and falsehood, touches on matters very important in their nature, and very proper to be developed a little just at this time, when the mammoth of iniquity seems to be fast approaching his end. Thou complainest to thy friend William, that the West India Merchants and Planters are endeavouring to *over-reach* thee. And, if they do *that*, they have, as the old saying is, *only one more* to overreach, I can tell them that for their encouragement.

The case, as you state it, is this; that sugar is imported from the East as well as from the West Indies; that the East India sugar has a higher duty imposed upon it than the West India sugar has; that the West Indians are endeavouring to have this difference *increased;* that, against this increase you protest, being, as you are, a person engaged in the East India trade, but, and *more especially*, because the said increase would tend to uphold and perpetuate the *slave trade.*

This is the case, as stated by you. This is the subjeet on which you have addressed the public. It divides itself naturally into two parts, that is to say, the proposed *increase*, in a mere trafficking point of view; and the influence of that increase as to the *slave trade.* When I come to speak of this latter, I shall shave your brim off close to your hair, and let people see thee and thy respected *friend William* too.

* * * *

It is the mere trafficking part of the subject that we have first to discuss. The precise nature of the request or the application of the West India Merchants, or, rather, Planters, I am not informed of. But, it is clear, that they want an additional duty on East India Sugar, in order that theirs may not be depressed in price by the East India importation. Now, at first sight, this would be a little more unreasonable even than the application of the Agriculturasses; but, as will presently appear, the cases are very different indeed. The light which you place this conduct of the West Indians in is extremely odious, being nothing short of that of a desire to cultivate their lands by the hands of slaves, and those brought from Africa too.

Paragraph 6 contains this base imputation, and that conveyed in as artful a manner as need be. "It may *fairly* be asked," say you; and, then you go on, till you come to the slanderous conclusion; overlooking all the weighty reasons that make in favour of the West India Planter's application, and leaving your readers to believe, that there are *no disadvantages* at all, other than natural ones, that the West Indies are subjected to more than the East Indies. It is, according to you, *a fair open competition between the two countries;* and the West Indians are wanting a *monopoly*, because without *that*, they cannot carry on the cultivation.

Now is this *fair play*, friend Cropper? Is this *fairly* asking the question? It is not known to the nation at large, the applause of whom it was your intention to catch; but, it is very well known to you, that a West India Planter is little better than a *slave* himself, though he, in general, willingly enough contributes, in wish as well as in act, to keep us in slavery at home. You know well, that he cannot ship his produce to any country in Europe but this; that he must send it in an English ship; that he cannot sell his produce to go to the United States, except it go in an English ship; that he cannot get *building materials or provisions* (absolutely necessary to him) from the United States, except in English ships; and, you know, that he has thus lost, in great part, his *best buyer* and his *best seller!* For, the Americans, in the way of just retaliation, have shut out the English ships, trading between their country and our West Indies, while the colonies of *other nations* send their produce and receive their supplies in American ships!

What a monstrous disadvantage is here, and wholly unknown to the East

Indies! Did you then, put the question fairly, friend CROPPER?

* * * *

I now come to the second part of the subject of your letter, *the influence of the proposed measure as to the Slave trade.* The proposed measure is to lay an *additional duty* on East India Sugar in order to favour, or, rather, to prevent the ruin of the West India Planter. Now, say you this is to *encourage a continuance of the Slave trade;* because, it is giving to those who cultivate sugar by the means of *slaves* an *advantage* over those who cultivate it by the means of *free men!* Well said, brother sleek! We shall see presently what pretty *free men* the poor East Indians are; but, first of all, do we pay no *taxes* upon this East India Sugar that do not come under the *name of tax?* Do you know how many millions of money have been squeezed from the flesh and bones of English labourers within the last thirty years to *be paid to the East India Company?* I do not, just at this moment, but, has it been less than *thirty millions?* Are you aware of the taxes raised here to pay for Boards of Control, for Commissions of *Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, of which, for many years, the father of *Westminster's Pride, No.* 2,* has been at the head? Oh, yes; you are aware of all this, and of a great deal more; and you know well enough, that all these things ought to be added, in estimating the cost of East India produce.

But, to hold you to a single point, if I can, why is money *paid* by this miserable nation to the East India Company; that is to say, to a particular set of Merchants? We *owe* them, from time to time. And, *for what?* Oh! for various things! For expenses of the Cape of Good Hope; for the use of St. Helena; for provisions for our army; and for various other things. But, good friend Cropper, are not all these things connected with the keeping of India in subjection to these Merchants? Do they not all, in short, arise out of the possession of India? And what is this possession, then, but an *expense?* Many millions were paid to the East India Company for sending troops to the *Red Sea* to made head against Napoleon, who was thought to be directing his steps that way. This was for the security of "*our empire in the East;*" that is to say, we, the ass-like people of England, had to bear the burthens necessary to enable a band of merchants to carry on their traffic and their grindings in security! You seem to forget all this, friend Cropper; but, I can assure *thee*, that thy cunning cant will deceive very few people *now*, for the interest has to be paid for the *money borrowed to be paid to the East India Company*, or, rather, flung away to it. There are, even now, it seems, in these days of "*distress;*" in these days of "*retrenchment and economy;*" even yet, there are, it seems, about two millions to be plucked from the wings of the already-closely trimmed landlords to be "*paid*" (a good word!) to the East India Company! I do not pity the landlords. So that we get gold, and the labourers their belly full, I care not a straw for the rest; but, this will try Mr. HUME. He laudably exposed the misapplication of *thousands*; but, if he be for the giving of these *millions*, we shall owe him little. He understands all about the India affair. It is one grand Scotch matter. He belongs to the India Stock-holders. He is a conspicuous man at the India House. Let us *see*, then, whether he be staunch *here;* for this is the *touchstone.* I did not perceive him to *open* at all upon the subject of these *two millions.* A pretty affair it is however, and, if he be silent here, a fig for his rummaging into the dirt of the estimates. This India is one of the heads of the hydra; and, if he let it escape, I know what I and every man of common sense shall have to think of his motives.

Now, friend Cropper, have we ever had any money "*to pay*" to the West India Planters? Thou knowest that we have not. Thou knowest also, that we load the islands with placemen and pen-

* Sir John Cam Hobhouse, now Lord Broughton.—*Editor.*

sioners; and, in short, oppress them in all manner of ways. Therefore, when thou addressest thy respected friend William again, pray remember some, at least, of these things, and do not talk of the taxes we pay to support the West Indies whilst thou art wholly silent upon those which we have paid, are now paying, and shall continue to pay as long as the Bank paper will pass, to support the East Indies.

But, the sugar is raised in the East Indies by *free men;* the West Indians want duties put on the East India sugar that they may continue an "*infamous* traffic" in slaves; the refusing of their request would *discourage that slavery* by the means of which they wish to cultivate their lands; and the motive that induced *you* to embark in the India trade was that of putting an end to Negro-slavery.

"All this thou say'st, and all thou say'st is "lies." POPE.

However, we here come to the point with you. You shuffle and cant about a great deal; put together a queer jumble of abstract trash and *hearsay* and *guessing* fact; but we have from you this proposition closely insinuated; that *you* entered into the East India trade for the purpose of aiding the *cause of freedom.* This is false, or you are the foolishest man that ever walked about without a keeper. However, as this part of the subject is *large*, and as the public are deeply interested in the exposure of cant and hypocrisy, I have not room, in this Register to do that which I wish without neglecting other and more pressing matter. I shall, therefore, write thee another letter next week; and, in the meanwhile, I remain,

"Thy *assured* friend,"

WM. COBBETT.

To Mr. JAMES CROPPER—*continued.*

And now we come to *your professions*, friend Cropper, and the sincerity of those professions. You say, that you entered into the East India trade, "being persuaded that the cultivation (of sugar) by *free men* in the country of their birth must be cheaper than by *the transportation of slaves from Africa to the West Indies;*" and that you wish, for love of the cause of *freedom*, to encourage the East India sugar trade.

In the first place, you well know, that no slaves *are* transported from Africa to our West India Islands; and, yet, who, from reading your letter, would not suppose, that this was the case? Therefore, here is another *lie* in the words of truth. You do not *say*, that slaves *are* now transported from Africa to our West India Islands; but, you leave it to be *believed*, as a matter of course, though you *know the fact to be false.* And this, friend Cropper, whatever thou mayest think of it, is *lying*, and very wicked lying too, because it tends to your *own gain* and to the *injury of your neighbour.* Screw up your lips there, then, and now let us go on.

You say, as plainly as *you* can say any thing, that the *East India sugar* is cultivated by *free men.* Now, friend Cropper, the whole of *our* India, as we call it, *is enslaved.* All are the slaves of the thing called the Company, from the highest to the lowest. There is an *imprimatur on the press*, and, at any time, any one even an European, may, without so much as cause assigned, be seized, forced on board of ship, and sent out of the country! What are thy ideas of *slavery*, friend Cropper, if this be to be *free?* Aye, say you, but this is not like *West* India slavery. Here is no *property* that one man has in another. So, then, as long as this circumstance is wanting, you will not call it slavery. To rob the poor devils of almost their very teeth; to plunder them of every thing short of the bare means of existing; to plant *bayonets* round the fields when the crops are getting ripe to prevent the "*owner*" from taking away more than the poor pittance that is to be left him; to harass incessantly, to take composition for even life itself; to commit on men, in short, all sorts of extortions, violences and cruelties, with perfect impunity; is, according to you, to leave them "*free men*" still, so that they be not *property;* so that they cannot be bought and sold, or mortgaged, or let out, like *cattle!*

This is your idea of *freedom;* but, even here thy shuffle will not save thee; even here, in this meaning of the words, even according to this outrageous insult to common sense, *thou liest*, and that, too, this time, in plain terms; for, the East India sugar *is* raised by slaves; by slaves who are *property;* by slaves who are *bought and sold;* by slaves *who are mortgaged;* by slaves who are *let out* as cattle are; and all this thou knowest, too, or thou art that sort of *fool* which I am sure I do not take thee for.

That India is a country of *slavery*, of *plunder*, of *cruelties* elsewhere unheard of, we all know, if we know any thing beyond the limits of this Island. In short, it is so notorious, that, when a fellow from the East goes to settle in any part of England, even the common people call his riches "*blood-money.*" They do not know, however, that, *at last*, it is their *own money*, the fruit of their *own earnings;* of which I shall say more by-and-by. The abject, the vile slavery of India is notorious. The cruelties inflicted upon the poor timid creatures of that country have rung throughout the world. But, the real state of that part of the miserable wretches who actually *do the work on the plantations* is not so generally known as it ought to be, though there can be no doubt of your being acquainted with the matter.

Their state is pretty well described by Dr. Francis Buchannan, who, during the sway of the *Elder Wellesley*,* was ordered by him to take a sort of *Survey* of the country; and the account of this survey the Doctor published in England, in a thick quarto book, in 1807, under the *authority* of that precious tribe, called the "*Honourable*" *East India Company.*

This account gives such a picture of human degradation, that it is impossible to read it without flinging down the book fifty times in an hour, stung half to death with indignation and rage. This Scotchman appears to have no shame in detailing acts of the most monstrous oppression and cruelty. He seems, like all the Scotch philosophers that I have ever read, to look upon the mass of mankind merely as *cattle;* and when he complains of *ill* treatment of them, it is in the way that we speak of the ill treatment of cows and pigs; that is to say that it is *unprofitable* to treat them ill. I will now, friend Cropper, treat thee to an extract from this book, pages 370 and 371, and I beg thee, when thou hast read it, to look into thy glass, and then say, whether thou thinkest that there are many faces to match thine upon the face of this earth. Remember, this is an *authority* quite complete. You must deny the *existence of the book*, or show that my quotation is false; or you must acknowledge that you are a *slave trader yourself;* for, your ships are employed in bringing away the produce of the toil of slaves. You can shuffle and shuffle and shuffle; but you cannot shuffle out of this. You can cant and cant and cant; but you cannot cant these words off the paper. Remember, that they are the words of a "*Servant*" of the East India Company, and that that servant made his survey under the orders of the *Elder Wellesley!* What do you want more? Remember, too, that the author was a *Scotchman*, and that he had begun his career in the *West Indies*. Bear these things in mind, and then read, and see if you have virtue enough left to send up a blush!

"By far the greater part of the labour in the field is performed by *Slaves* or *Churmar*. These are the *absolute property* of their *Devarus*, or lords, and may be employed in any work that their masters please. They are not attached to the soil, but *may be sold*, or transferred in any manner that the master thinks fit, only a husband and wife cannot be sold separately; but *children may be separated from their parents*, and brothers from their sisters. The slaves are of different castes, such as *Parriar, Vullam, Canacun, Erilay*, &c.; and the differences in the customs by which the marriages of these castes are regulated occasion a considerable variation in the

* Marquis Wellesley, brother of the Duke of Wellington.—*Editor.*

right of the master to the children of his slaves, according to the caste to which they belong. The master is considered as bound to give the slave a certain allowance of provisions; a man or woman, while capable of labour, receives two *Edangallies* of rice *in the husk*, weekly, or *two-sevenths of the allowance that I consider as reasonable for persons of all ages included.* Children, and old persons past labour, get *one-half only of this pittance;* and *no allowance whatever is made for infants.* This would be totally inadequate to support them; but the slaves on each estate get one-twenty-first part of the gross produce of the rice, in order to encourage them to care and industry. A male slave annually gets *seven cubits of cloth* and a woman fourteen cubits. They *erect for themselves* small temporary huts, that are *little better than large baskets.* These are placed in the rice fields while the crop is on the ground, and near the stacks while it is thrashing. There are three modes of transferring the *usufruct of slaves.* The first is by *Jemmum*, or sale, where the full value of the slave is given, and the property is entirely transferred to a new master, who is in some measure bound by his interest to attend to the welfare of his slave. A young man with his wife will sell for from 250 to 300 Fanams, or from £6 4*s.* 1½*d.* to £7 8*s.* 11½*d.* Two or three young children will add 100 *Fanams*, or £2 9*s.* 7¾*d.* to the value of the family. Four or five children, two of whom are beginning to work, will make the family worth from 500 to 600 *Fanams*, or from £12 8*s.* 3*d.* to £14 17*s.* 11*d.* The other two tenures are utterly abominable, for the person who exacts the labour, and furnishes the subsistence of the slave, is *directly interested to increase the former and diminish the latter as much as possible.* In fact *the slaves are very severely treated;* and their *diminutive stature* and *squalid appearance* show evidently a *want of adequate nourishment.* There can be *no comparison between their condition and that of the slaves in the West Indies.*"

Now, friend CROPPER, here are your "*free men,*" that cultivate this sugar and rice and indigo, which you import from the East in order to *prevent slave dealing in the West!* The Doctor was not only a *hard* Scotchman, but he had been in the West Indies into the bargain, and, therefore, was a very good judge of the two cases. Here, you see, the poor wretched creatures had, for a certainty, but *two-sevenths* of what even this Scotchman deemed *necessary to human sustenance!* Is this the case with the West India Negroes? Much fault has been found, and, in some cases, I dare say, justly found, with the treatment of these negroes; but, did it ever yet occur to any body to accuse their masters of *keeping them in a state of half starvation?* At the time when Doctor Buchannan wrote, the cultivation of sugar had not been introduced in India, or, at least, not to any extent; but *all over the country he found the labour performed by slaves;* SALEABLE slaves, MORTGAGEABLE slaves, RENTABLE slaves.

Thy assured friend WILLIAM, who has made such a bellowing for the last forty years about the cruelties of the *West* Indians, has never opened his lips upon the subject of *East India* slavery, though that is ten times more cruel and ten times more extensive. Thy friend WILLIAM had his reasons for this, I dare say, as his friend and relation, STEPHEN, had for being the trumpeter to the late destructive and disgraceful American war, and for becoming speedily afterwards, a Master in Chancery. Thy friend WILLIAM has seldom been without his reasons for being a constant supporter of the late wars and of power of imprisonment bills and Six-Acts; and, in short, of every one of those measures, which have created that *debt*, the consequences of which are now making the once insolent part of this community shake in their very shoes, while their knees knock together and their teeth chatter in their heads.

But, these reflections apart, what a figure do you cut, now that your brim is shaved off? Where is now your sincerity in telling the public, that you em-

barked in the East India trade for the purpose of giving encouragement to the "cultivation of sugar by the hands of *free men?*"

Now, friend CROPPER, I have fulfilled my promise. I have taken your brim off completely, and have placed you in full view before that public, which your canting appeal to the *Saints* was intended to cajole and deceive. I detest all the slave traffic; not so much, however (for I will be no hypocrite) on account of the slaves themselves, if they be *well fed and well treated*, as on *our own account;* knowing well, as I do, that whatever the vile miscreants wring from the carcasses of slaves abroad, they use for the purpose of making us slaves at home. I detest the vermin of both Indies. They are essentially dependant upon the government. If there be corruption or tyranny, they are essentially its most desperate adherents. Even this struggle between the East and West Indians makes both of them dependant. They are *necessarily*, under the present system of taxation, *enemies to the liberties and happiness of England.*

I, therefore, shall look with uncommon anxiety to what Mr. Hume will do; for, I apprise him before hand, that I am not for applauding that species of economy, that *retrenches* at the *spicket*, and, at the same time, knocks out the *bung*. However, as to you, friend Cropper, all that Doctor Buchannan has written is false, or you are labouring to your utmost to uphold a system of the vilest and cruelest Slavery. You know, as well as I do, that the sugar, the cotton, the rice, the indigo, the all, in short, which your ships bring from the East Indies, is the produce of the sweat and blood of miserable half starved slaves, and that you are instrumental in the perpetrating of their Slavery. But you know a great deal more than this, and that is, that the very country in which this Slavery is carried on, is held by *incessant wars*, which cannot be said, at any rate, of the *West India Islands.* In that ill-fated country, there is absolutely *interminable war.* Peace has not been known there for forty years. Long and bloody as were the wars in Europe, from 1792 to 1815, more human blood has been shed in India since 1792, than in Europe. These wars, too, are carried on by *foreigners against the natives* in their own country, and that, too, in a manner absolutely beyond the powers of description! All this *you well know;* yet to that country you send your ships, to bring away the produce, squeezed from the wasted carcasses of slaves, and this, besides, under the hypocritical pretence of *wishing to discourage Slavery!*

However, such conduct is by no means new in the *trafficking* part of your sect; a sect, estimable for many qualities of an excellent description; but, when that *prudence*, which is a great characteristic of the sect, degenerates into *selfishness* and *greediness*, the Quaker becomes the most mischievous, the most perseveringly, most efficiently, most successfully mischievous of all the creatures that God ever made.

(From *Register*, 1822.)

From letter to MR. HUME, on the proposed Vote of Money to the East India Company.

Kensington, 2 July, 1822.

I long ago observed that the question relating to the pretended Debt due to the East India Company would put to the test your sincerity with regard to a desire to ease this half broken-backed nation of its burdens. That question has now been before the House of Commons; and I am truly sorry to have to say that my anticipations have been but too fully verified.

Mr. Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, last night (the 1st of July), brought forward this claim of the East India Company, with regard to which, he made a strange and confused statement.

* * * *

As to a minute inquiry into the affairs of this East India Company as connected with the Government, the thing is impossible. There has been such confusion, and such a shameful neglect of all timely means of elucidation, that to go into particulars is impossible; I can, therefore, only lay before my

readers a sort of general view of the manner in which the people of this country have been treated by the East India Company, and by the several Ministers since the Company obtained their charter in the year 1793.

In the year 1806 the country had been called upon and had paid to this East India Company two millions of money. At that time I called upon the country to look at the thing in its true light. And from the first of my Essays upon the subject I take the following passage: "To talk of the oppressing, the insulting, and the plundering of the Princes of India cannot be expected to have much effect amongst a people, who made not a single remonstrance upon the subject of the capture of the Spanish frigates, and the subsequent appropriation of their treasure, without a previous declaration of war;* but, as this same people may possibly be alive to the demands of money *from themselves*, for the purposes of carrying on wars against the Princes of Hindostan, information must be given them upon the subject of those demands; and, if this information be not given, in the most clear and full manner, by the new Ministry, they will be greatly wanting both to the country and themselves. The people hear of great fortunes being made in the East; they hear of plunder enormous, and they see the plunderers come and elbow them from their homes; but, they never appear to perceive, that any part of this plunder is, either first or last, drawn from their own estates or their labour. They seem to think, that there are great quantities of goods and of gold and precious stones in India; and, the only feeling which the acquirers of these excite, seems to be that of envy, and, in some instances, of emulation. But that this proceeds from a gross error would, in the two millions lately paid to the East India Company out of the taxes of the nation, have been clearly demonstrated, had not our system of finance been such as to keep in darkness, upon this point, men otherwise well-informed. Now, however, the demands upon the taxes must, for the purposes of India, be such as will, I should imagine, open men's eyes, especially if the Ministry make and promulgate an authentic statement of the nation's affairs. Thirteen years ago a charter, by the influence of Mr. Pitt and his colleague Dundas, was granted to the East India Company, whereby were secured to the said company of merchants certain rights of sovereignty in, and, with some exceptions, an exclusive trade with, those countries in Asia which we, taking them altogether, call the East Indies. As the foundation of their firm, or partnership, of trade, this Company were allowed by the charter, to create a quantity of Stock; that is to say, to make loans, in the same way that the Ministry do, and to pay annually, or quarterly, in dividends, interest upon the amount of these loans. The Company became, in fact, a sort of under government, having its loans, its scrip, its debt, or, more properly speaking, its funds, or still more properly, its engagements to pay interest to a number of individuals.—The paper, of whatever form it may be, which entitles the holder to demand this interest, or these dividends, is called East India Stock, the principal of which has now been augmented to the sum of twelve millions sterling; and, the holders of this stock are called *East India proprietors*. The sources whence the means of regularly discharging the interest upon the stock were to be derived, were, of course, the profits of the trade which the Company should carry on, but, aided by the revenue which they were authorised to raise from their territory, the defence and government of which were, however, placed, in some sort,

* These were four Spanish frigates, laden with some millions of dollars, coming from South America, in 1804, and attacked, off Cadiz, by four English frigates under command of Captain Moore, who was stationed there to catch them. Some hundreds of the Spanish crews, and passengers, were killed. The frigate *Mercedes* blew up, and the greater part of those on board perished. This was a hit at France through the ribs of Spain; and, in Government spirit, like our slaughter of the Danes in 1801.—*Editor.*

under the control of the mother government at Westminster. Thus set out in the world this Company of Sovereigns, furnished, at once, with dominions, subjects, taxes, and a funded debt. But, supposing the measure (which I do only by way of illustration) to have been, in other respects, just and politic, it certainly would have been neither, not to have bound these sovereigns to pay the nation something, or, more properly speaking, to contribute something towards the taxes, by way of consideration for the immense advantages to be derived from the exclusive trade of a country, while the nation might be called upon, as it has been, to defend it by a navy, and which must, at any rate, be defended on the land-board by troops drawn, in part at least, from the population of the kingdom. It was, therefore, provided, that the Company, during the continuance of its charter, which was to be for twenty years (thirteen of which have nearly expired) should pay into the Exchequer, 500,000*l.* sterling a-year, and that, upon all the money not so paid, an interest should arise and accumulate, at the rate of fifteen per centum.—Such were the principal engagements, on both sides, under which this Company started. The nation has fulfilled its engagements, and that, too, at an enormous expenditure both of men and of money; and, while the Company has been enjoying all the advantages of an exclusive trade, and all the receipts of a territorial revenue; while hundreds and thousands of persons, concerned in that trade, have amassed fortunes so great as to overshadow and bear down, not only the clergy and the country gentlemen, but even the ancient nobility of the kingdom, not one penny (since the *first* year) has the Company ever paid into the Exchequer of the stipulated half million a-year; and, what is still more glaringly unjust, and more galling to the burdened people, two millions of our taxes have already been granted to this Company, wherewith to pay the dividends upon their stock; and, such has been the management, and such is now the state, of the Company's affairs, that we need not be at all surprised if another million be called for from us, during the present Session of Parliament. For the *causes* of this state of the Company's concerns; for the reasons why they have not been held to their engagements; why the Act of Parliament has thus been treated as if it had been passed merely as a job; why we have been called to pay to, instead of to receive from, this Company of trading Sovereigns; let the eulogist of Mr. Pitt's memory, let Mr. Canning, Old Rose, and Colonel Pattypan; let Lord Melville, with his 2,000*l.* a-year pension from the Company (who are so poor as to come to us for money); let the Directors, those managers of the Company's affairs, and those stanch advocates of the Minister that suffered the act to lie unenforced against them; let Lord Wellesley, who has so long been the Governor General of India: why the act has not been enforced, why the law has been thus shamefully set at naught, let these persons tell."*

Now, let it be observed, this charter expired without one single farthing of the ten millions of money, except the first half million, ever having been paid into the Exchequer. The Act of Parliament passed on the 11th of July, 1793, ordered that half a million a-year should be paid into the Exchequer to be disposed of as Parliament should think proper; that is to say, to be applied to the service of the country. The Act provided, that, in case of failure to pay the half million into the Exchequer, the money should be recovered in damages in any court of record in Westminster; that, in case the Directors found it inconvenient to pay the sum into the Exchequer, the Directors should represent the matter to the Treasury, and that Treasury might agree to suspend the payment by making an order to that effect; but that, (and pray mark this), the Treasury should, in fourteen days

* See two *Letters to the Thinking People of England, on the Affairs of the East India Company*; in 1813: *Register*, vol. 23; *Selections from Cobbett's Works*, vol. 4, pp. 168, 176.—*Editor.*

after making such order, if Parliament should then be sitting, or otherwise, within fourteen sitting days of the then next sitting Parliament, lay a copy of the said order and of the representation of the Court of Directors, *before both Houses of Parliament.*

Now during the whole of the twenty years that this Act remained in force, the money was paid into the Exchequer only the first year; and yet no copy of such order; no copy of such representation of the Directors *was ever laid before either House of Parliament;* and, of course, the Act was violated in the most flagrant manner; the Company still owed the money, and though it might at any time have been sued for in the Courts at Westminster, it never has been paid to this day.

If war arose so as to disable the Company, the money was not to be made good so as to impede the accumulation of a fund to pay the stockholders; but this was not to warrant the suspending of any payment into the Exchequer, without a representation of the Directors to the Treasury; without an *order* of the Treasury, and without the laying copies of both these before the two Houses of Parliament; a thing that was never done during the whole twenty years that the charter lasted; that is to say, from the year 1793 to the year 1812, both inclusive. The Whigs came into office in 1806, and they winked at all these breaches of the law, they said not a word about the *seven millions* already due from the East India Company, and winked at the two millions, which during the first thirteen years of the charter had been given to that Company out of the taxes raised upon the labour of the people of these kingdoms.

At this time the Company owes the country, principal and interest, very nearly *thirty millions of money.* The reader will bear in mind, that the first half million became due in 1794. He will bear in mind that that is half a million of money going on at compound interest for eighteen years, and that the interest was *fifteen per cent.* I have only had time for a hasty calculation; but any figure-man will satisfy himself in a moment, that the Debt now due by the Company on account of that charter is now upwards of thirty millions of money; and that Debt ought to be paid, too, or every stick and stone of these commercial Sovereigns ought to be sold. What was the bargain made for; why was an Act of Parliament passed? Was it for the purpose of deluding and cheating the nation? And if it was not, why has nobody ever proposed to put the law in force?

When that charter was granted this set of merchants had great advantages given them at the expense of the nation. They were to have the exclusive trade to the East, and they had it. They were to have the territorial revenue in India. The nation was to be at the expense of fleets to defend them in their trade and possessions; and at the expense of boards and offices connected with India. The nation had to pay dearer for articles had from the East, on account of this charter. The shipowners of this country were prevented from employing their ships in that trade. These were monstrous advantages to the Company of Merchants; far exceeding in value half a million a-year; and yet of the twenty half millions the nation never got but one!

But, besides this, the nation has had to *pay five millions*, I think it is, already, to this Company; and now it has to pay one million three hundred thousand pounds more; and not a word do you say, Sir, in the way of sifting into this matter. The two Lords of the Admiralty, the second Post Master General, and the other little chippings that have led to such endless debates and such piles of figures, have had great importance attached to them, while not a word is said about the enormous sums squandered upon this cormorant Company and its retainers, who have swallowed, within these thirty years, directly and indirectly, a hundred millions of that money which has already been wrung principally from the labouring

classes of England, or has yet to be wrung from them, in payment of the interest of the National Debt.

You are not able to discover how it is that almost the whole swarm of your countrymen are held steady under the banners of the system by the taxes of England which they suck down through the channel of India. Mr. VANSITTART said, that the Company was to be negociated with, as if an *independent State*. Our misfortune is, that it is not an independent state; but a perfect monster in politics; England supporting all the expense of it, and the emigrating Scotch swallowing all the profits. Talk of the corruptions in Scotch Burghs, indeed, the Burghs would be of little consequence were it not for English taxes, the Burghs would be pure enough were it not for that Asiatic conductor through which the fruit of English labour is sucked down the throats of the Scotch. Thirteen hundred thousand pounds are now, in addition to all that is gone before, going down into that insatiable maw, and you say not one single word about the matter! You have sometimes talked of a Reform of the Parliament. Do you think that such a parliament would cause to be paid out of the taxes those immense sums every year, which are paid directly and indirectly to feed the hungry vultures that sail for India? The Americans, if we consider the cost of India to us, import every article from the East at about a fourth part of what those articles cost us. They bring them to Europe and sell them cheaper than they can be sold after being brought even by the East India Company. To what end, then, are we taxed for the support of this colony? I ask to what end we are thus taxed for this purpose; and it is impossible for you to answer, except by acknowledging that it is for the purposes of that very patronage and very influence against which you have so often, and so justly inveighed, and to curtail which you have made so many laudable exertions.

During the last war, our pretty gentlemen published the intercepted correspondence of Napoleon. It was not thought to be a very honourable proceeding, especially as some of his letters related solely to his private affairs and private feelings. Some years afterwards, the French intercepted a parcel of private letters from India, in which that wary Scot, Mr. *Stuart Hall*, made a very conspicuous figure, and in which *one of the Bentincks* very fully explained the real uses, the real practical purposes of our Empire in the East. The whole elucidation was comprised in one short phrase: to *get money!* Foolish people in this country *think that the money is got there;* and so it is; but it is only as my men get beer at the lower end of my garden, by carrying it or having it sent down to them from the house. The poor wretches in India are, indeed, slaves. They work for their masters; and we squeeze those masters; but as to the money that is got, as to the several millions a-year that formerly used to be brought home to build big white houses on the tops of hills, and the probably one million a-year that is now brought home for that purpose, and for the buying up of estates in England, be you assured that it has come from English taxes, the payment of which, in part, at least, requires the surrender of these estates. An additional thirteen hundred thousand pounds are now applied to pass through the same funnel and for the same purposes, and you, the great hero of retrenchment and economy, leave the stupid English landlords to hug themselves with joy at the thought of paying little more than a quarter part of what the East India Company demanded!

It is the most fallacious notion in the world, that, because the money is received *abroad*, we do not pay it.

* * * *

There was a Sir *Timothy Metcalfe* some years ago, who defended the East India Company by saying that it was a great benefactor to the nation in *giving it* so many millions a-year in the *duty on tea*. Posterity may judge of the pass to which we were come, when this could be listened to in the House of Commons without absolutely earning the orator a

kicking. It did, however, not earn him any such thing; and there was not found in the House the man with a sufficiency of sense and of spirit to remind the impudent babbler that these several millions a-year were paid by the people of this country themselves. We were then in the heyday of glory and paper-money. Loan upon loan marked the progress. The foolish landlords thought there never would be an end to their prosperity; and they seemed to care not a straw about the sufferings of the labouring classes, whose happiness they sacrifice without remorse to glut the maws of the Indian devourers.

What, I wonder, would the American people say, if they had to pay a tax in order to be given to their Merchants who trade to India. India is fully as beneficial to their commerce as it is to ours. They rival us in the trade. Their navigation derives more benefit from it than ours does. Yet they have no "Honourable East India Company;" and the Congress would as soon think of passing an act or a vote, to cause themselves to be hanged, as they would think of levying a tax to raise money to be given to Merchants. What sense, then, can there be in our going on in this manner? What sense in throwing away millions in order to narrow the limits of our trade? Why keep up this voracious Company? To restrain other nations would be natural enough; but why restrain a part of ourselves? Why give a monopoly to one part of the traders? If the public Treasury received payment for the monopoly, that might be something. There might then be room for dispute about the matter; but why give a part of the traders of the nation a monopoly, and then raise taxes upon the nation to pay them for that monopoly. If the goings on in India; if the proceedings in that country; if that treatment of the inoffensive natives which has given us such a character throughout the world, and which has furnished the French with so many a sarcastic observation on our "*humanity*" with regard to the Negroes; if this yielded us *profit*, there would be something to say for it; very little, to be sure; but there would be something: as it is, there is nothing, except it be that we commit these dreadful deeds because we like them so well, that, rather than not commit them, we will give up the fruit of our labour to support us in the commission.

The nation, however, knows little or nothing of the matter. It hears talk of the *riches of India*, as it hears talk of the riches of Peru and Mexico, little thinking all the while, that it is its own earnings that make the adventurers shine, and that it is a full participator in the misery which it causes those adventurers to inflict on the unoffending inhabitants of Asia. This branch of the system, however, growing on along with the rest, has, at last, attained nearly the utmost extent of its dimensions. The system of borrowing has come to an end. The resources are fast drying up; and all the parts of the system are fast getting into the state of the members unfed from the circulation proceeding from the belly. We are hastening into that state so prophetically described by the Abbe Reynal, who, I remember, most emphatically dwelt upon the *final effects of our system in India.*

Upon the face of the thing it is monstrous to hold any colony that requires taxation levied upon the mother country itself to be given to the owners of that colony; yet millions upon millions have been voted in this way. The concern is, therefore, manifestly an affair of *patronage*, and nothing more; and if the thirteen hundred thousand pounds now to be voted, were to be directly distributed here in London, for the purposes of influence in support of the present system, it could not answer that purpose more effectually than it now will.

As to the figure that the thing now makes before the public, what do we need more than the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself to know, that, at the very least, a most minute and strict inquiry by the House of Commons ought to have taken place before a farthing of this money were voted! He begins by telling us that the

East India Company had *demanded five millions*, and that they had agreed to take thirteen hundred thousand pounds! What should we think of a tradesman who suffered his Bill to be pared down in this way? The Chancellor tells us that there has been a negociation as with an *independent state!* For what, then, are these *Boards of Control?* For what are all these offices and officers? For what? Why for patronage, to be sure; and so is the whole thing from the beginning to the end.

But will the Parliament, under all these suspicious circumstances, vote this sum of money *without inquiry?* An *arbitration* has been sitting. But who was the abritrator, by whom appointed, or how chosen? Would such a story satisfy the Chief Justice, as a ground for judgment in his Court, were the case of a sum of ten pounds? Will the Parliament pass this vote without solemn investigation? And will you suffer such vote to pass without as great a struggle, at least, as you have in many cases laudably made with a view of preventing the squandering of five hundred pounds?

With this question I close my letter, not without feeling as strongly as any man in the country for the efforts that you have made in our behalf; but I cannot close it without adding that I never can admire the straining at a gnat and the swallowing of a camel.

The foregoing *Remarks* of Mr. Cobbett (like those of other writers and speakers of thirty and fifty years back) are confirmed by all recent evidences and results.—The connexion of the East India Company and the English Government began, like William the Third's National Debt, in a gratuity, or sum of money, paid by the Company to the Government. The combined rule, of Company and Government, has finally, in spite of all warning and all remonstrance, brought us to the present pass.

The wish, of all others uppermost, the first thing to pray for should be, that we may have heard the worst; that we may hear of no further sufferings for our innocent and helpless people in India. But the hearts of our Press are so swelled with "vengeance," as to have room for scarcely any thing else. Their bellowing is, to prevent us, if possible, from duly reproaching that System of Government which has so long persecuted both Indians and Englishmen. The *Observer* (a Government organ) of the 13th instant, says, that it "never much believed in Indian grievances;" but it promises "to punish this most savage and ungrateful revolt." It says, that "to defeat and to punish these miscreants is our first object;" that "the myriads of barbarians shall be overpowered by the might and majesty of the army of Great Britain." Dr. Bowyer, the Roman Catholic Member of Parliament, even exceeds this. He deems it necessary to excuse the language of Cardinal Wiseman upon the awful visitation. He does it (in the *Times* of the 15th inst.) thus:—"We must "have no sentimentality nor mistaken philanthropy, but stern and terrible justice. I "concur with what I read lately in one of your leading articles, that an awful example "should be made of Delhi, that not one stone of that city should be left upon another. "The plough should pass over the ground on which Delhi now stands." That figure of "the plough, &c.," is literally borrowed from our Protectionist writers, who once, to be revenged on the League, threatened, in the very same words, the towns of Birmingham and Manchester with "the plough"! But, will Dr. Bowyer be "sternly and terribly just," when he next comes to the place for showing it? He tells us. "For my part," says he, "I shall give my humble support in Parliament to the most vigorous measures, &c." We understand what that means.

Suppose that we killed one-half of the native subjects of India; that a large part of a hundred millions were put to the sword or hanged; would it bring to life those poor people, of our own kindred, who have been so cruelly betrayed by us to their fate; could it lessen the cause of grief to the survivors; would it be creditable to the feelings of the English nation, and does it suit their sense of honour, justice, manliness, and humanity, to be *satisfied* with *that?*

Alas! we are reduced to this wretched comparison, that of our Christian selves to the Fanatics of India: "We, Englishmen, are *less* cruel than you Hindoos and Mahomedans." Those who only cry "vengeance" for the results, and stop there, are wilful veilers and screeners of the cause of the calamity.

They know, or ought to know, that it has been a cruel System throughout, whether from obstinacy in power or greediness for profit. They all know of those proofs of Indian tortures, now just brought before Parliament. They ought to know, if they do not, that the System from which they would turn our reproaches has been a torturer, too, of Christian men: not merely of the Chinese, as lately described, with becoming "shame" for us, by Sir Henry Pottinger. No: but of our own flesh and blood. Do they forget the deeds of our "General No-flint," in the American war of Independence? Do they "never much believe in" the plunderings, burnings, murderings, and ravishings, in the towns and villages, in 1812? Are they ignorant of Burke's motion, in the House of Commons, for disallowing the money "advanced (by a British Ministry) to purchase hatchets, tomahawks, "and scalping knives, for the Savages of North America to butcher, torture, scalp, and "massacre old men, women, and children, and infants at the breast"? These are the words of Burke.—(*Parliamentary History, vol.* 19, *p.* 971.)

The Catholic crusader with "the plough" should know, that, once into Delhi, no commands to discriminate and to spare, no cry for quarter or mercy will stay our troops; that guilty and innocent are alike doomed. Yet is the terrible Dr. Bowyer flat down upon his stomach, in subjection to this hollow cry of our press. Not to question his heart, his own head would have shown less "mistaken philanthropy" if he could have stooped to follow the warning of Archdeacon Denison's sermon, and rather resisted "the horrible and revolting spirit of extermination now stimulated by our public prints."

Our newspapers just inform us (*Daily News*, Sept. 22) that Lord Elgin, come from China to India, is about to take Sepoys from the latter to the former; to take the murderous Sepoy, to fight our battle with the other "barbarian" with whom we are "*not* at war."

So that, what was pursued in India, by Lord Dalhousie (a Ramsay), is to be followed up, in China, by Lord Elgin (a Bruce). While Englishmen are being sent to wreak our vengeance on the Indians, as ferocious rebels against all that is human, the same Indians, as "stanch and loyal" men, and yet "black devils," are to be led upon Canton. Aye, in the war of Doctor Bowring, formerly President of the English "Peace Society." The tongues of a thousand Sheridans, with a thousand fold of their bombast upon Warren Hastings, would fail of colours to depict this whole idea. And *this* is to be enacted by *England*, the civilizer of nations, the "sacred refuge of mankind," the missionary of the Gospel of Christ.

MR. FIELDEN, ON "COTTON SUPPLY."

Just while this mutiny was breaking forth there were numerous meetings held in Lancashire, with the view of promoting the growth of cotton, in order that it might be had at lower price. It was proposed to encourage the growing of cotton in India, and to obtain Parliamentary aid for such purpose. That proposal, it must be observed, was not in accordance with the maxims of the free-traders, which were, "no legislative interference," but everything to be "governed by the law of supply and demand." That was the doctrine which they enforced upon the agricultural interest, while declaring, for themselves, that they only asked to be let alone. But however important our cotton manufacture, the Statute-Book shows that no other thing was ever more promoted and protected by Act of Parliament. We have, among other enactments, excluded East India calicos, to the starvation of East Indian subjects. And now, within a few weeks past, it has even been suggested to send the English labourer to the climate of India, there to plant and pick cheap cotton!

Raw cotton, as alleged, has lately become "scarce;" or, in other words, it is not low enough in price fairly to remunerate the manufacturer, considering the moderate, or low price, which he gets for his cotton-made goods.—The case seems to be, that cotton wool, which, not long back, was at about 5½*d.* to 6d. the lb., has of late been about 8¼d.; while, to make a fair profit as goods now sell, the maker of them would require the material to be at something like the former price.

The greater part of this material comes to us from the United States, which, as the free-traders have repeatedly told us, is "our best customer" for our manufactured goods. But, so far as relates to that customer, how far was it reasonable to expect that his raw cotton could keep at the lower price? Just consider these facts. The prices of commodities in general have risen, since 1853, in all countries. That of raw cotton has only kept pace with other things. All those things called the necessaries of life have, for some time past, been higher in the United States than in England. Last month (August, 1857), our bread, the 4 lb. loaf, varied in this way: 8*d.* and 8½*d.* to 9*d.* in London; 9*d.* at Liverpool; 7*d.* to 7½*d.* in Manchester; 6½*d.* to 7*d.* in Derby. But during the same month, at Philadelphia, the same quantity of bread was selling for more than 1*s.* of our money; while other articles, in nearly the like proportion, were dearer in America than in England. Whatever the cause, such is the fact.

The remedy of the late Mr. John Fielden, the Member for Oldham, was, to work less time, and produce less goods. We have room here for only an extract from his pamphlet on the *Factory System*, published in 1836. The whole of that pamphlet is most interesting, as applicable to the present state of the cotton manufacture, a branch of trade on which the condition of so many of our people is depending. Mr. Fielden says:

"We shall not have to wait long before spinners will be as anxious for a short-time bill as the operatives. Dr. Kay,* of Manchester, whose pamphlet of 1832 I have quoted above, tell us, in his Report to the Poor-Law Commissioners, July, 1835, that there are now erecting, in the cotton district and its vicinity, factories which will bring into operation 7,500 horse-power above what is in work now; that is, about one-sixth

* Now Sir J. P. Kay Shuttleworth, Bart.—*Ed.*

more; and if we are destined to see this realized, my opinion is, that we shall then see the beginning of the end. * * * 'Foreign competition' is a humbug; but from competition among ourselves we have everything to fear. * * * The advance in the price of cotton has had three causes: partly, a diminished stock; partly, that quick consumption, owing to our long hours of work, which makes us tread on the heels of the cotton-growers; and partly, by speculations in cotton, caused by an increase in the circulating medium.† * * * If the present hours of work be continued, the people will have to pass through a fiery ordeal to bring back again 300 lbs. of cotton for 16 pieces of 72 power-loom cloth, instead of giving 24, the number we gave last year. And this must be done, before the cotton manufacture again is what it ought to be with regard to the exchange of our manufactures for foreign productions. There are two ways of effecting this: the one is by rich and powerful men continuing to work the same hours they now do, while their weaker brethren, unable to bear up against the losses consequent upon their attempt to do so, will break down under their difficulties, and their people be thrown out of employ. The other is, by an immediate general reduction of the hours of labour. * * * No one who reflects can be otherwise than alarmed at the prospect that this state of things presents. If what Dr. Kay says be true, then this must require an increased quantity of cotton to about the same extent. Where is it to come from? Recollect, that the growers of cotton cannot increase their slaves, to cultivate this plant, with the same facility that we are increasing our steam-engines and our machinery. This is a natural impediment that we cannot overcome; and, therefore I say, that the Economists have overshot their mark, and that, if the manufacturers will still be their dupes, and neglect all the entreaties made by their workpeople to reduce the hours of work, a visitation may come upon them such as I have described." [Some of our manufacturers are now adopting and repeating these opinions of Mr. Fielden, as we find by their letters in the *Manchester Guardian* of last month, Aug. 19 and 27.—*Ed.*]

† Which, in fact, has been the recent cause.—*Ed.*

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